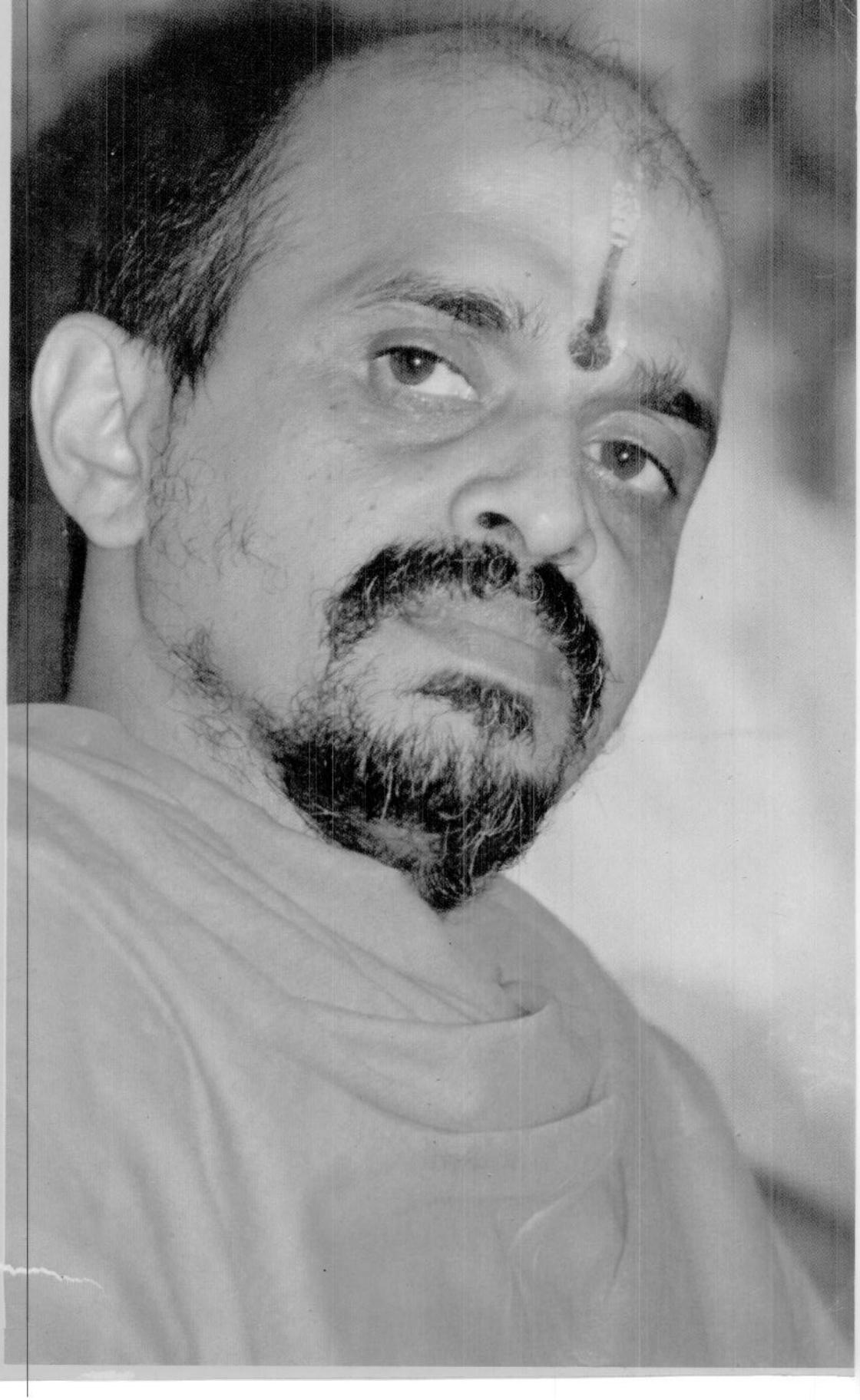
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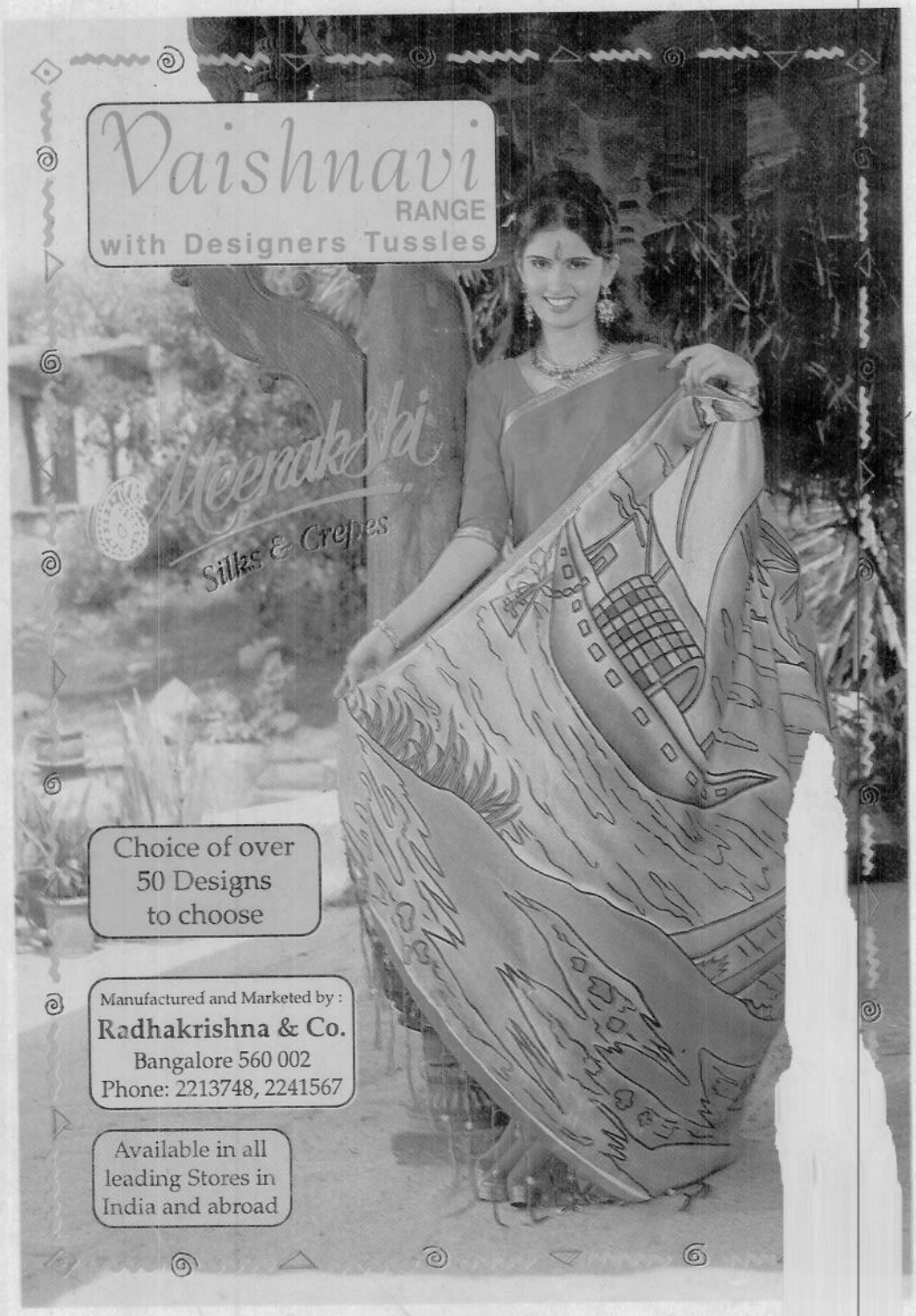
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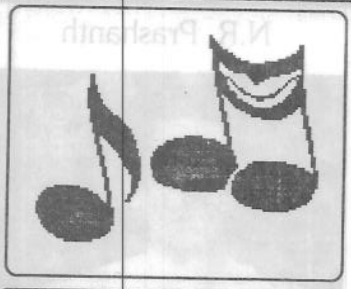
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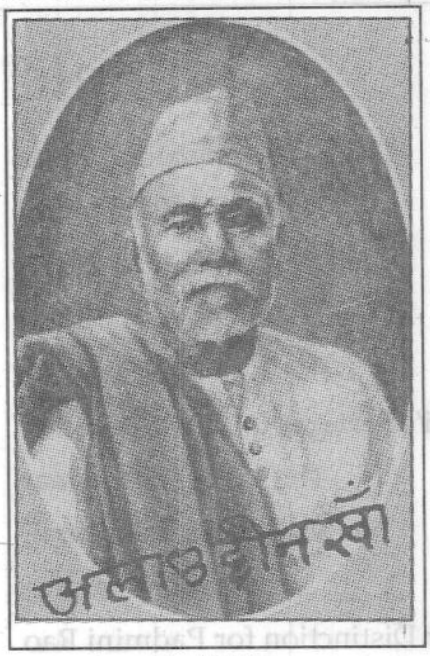
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Tuneful Encounters-3

Bachcha to Bap, Badshah to Fans!

S.N.Sivaswamy



Allauddin Khan

In the earlier days of All India Radio, when I was in AIR, Madras, the stations did not have much funds. They had literally to operate on shoe-string budgets. Nevertheless, thanks for a system we had evolved, what is called "chain booking", we managed to invite great musicians from all over the country to participate in our programmes.

The device was to collaborate programme scheduling with a chain of stations and share the travelling and incidental expenses of the artistes. Thus we were able to present on South Indian stations the music of such all-time greats like Allauddin Khan, Faiaz Khan, Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, Hirabai Barodkar, Vilayat Khan, Roshanara Begum, Bade Gulam Ali Khan and the whole galaxy of them.

Allauddin Khan and his son Ali Akbar Khan, already a legend, had been invited by us on this 'chain booking' plan.

Alauddin Khan was known as the ustad of ustads. Look at the stalwarts among his disciples: Ali Akbar Khan, Ravi Shankar, Nikhil Banerji, Pannalal Ghosh - the list is endless.

We sat engrossed before the masters in the recording studio as he stunned the raga Multani with his magical fingers. His sitar spoke to each one of us evoking our inner most artistic feelings. The atmosphere in the studio was ecstatic as was the Ustad's face as he concentrated on the nuances of the raga with closed eyes.

When the rendering was over and Alauddin Khan placed the sitar in its covering, our Director remarked that the occasion was unique, in that his recital succeeded another memorable recording, on the sarod, by his son, Ali Akbar Khan.

To this, Allauddin Khan's stunning comment went something like this: "Voh kya bajata hai? Voh abhi bachcha hai!"("What does he play? He is still a child!")

N.R. Prashanth



Vocalist, N.R. Prashant (28) is the son of Rama Prasanna, who can execute music in all the three octaves is the disciple of R.K. Padmanabha.Now he is being guided by Neyveli Santhanagopalan of Madras.

His melodious voice and neat rendering of rare compositions have earned him appreciations from musicians and critics.

Prashanth has attended workshops on music conducted by leading musicians and has been adjudged as the best musician in junior concerts of Bangalore Gayana Samaja in 1993.

He is a B grade artiste in AIR and has performed in all the major cities in our country.

Prashant is an engineering graduate in Instrumentation from Malnad Engineering College and has now taken music as full time carrier and dedicates himself to uphold the traditional classic Carnatic music.

N.R.Prashanth
895, 20th Main, New 38th Cross 4th T Block, Jayanagar
Bangalore 560041 © 663 4021

A.P.Rao, 741, 'Abhiman'
7th Cross, III Block, Koramangala,
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Editorial

Jugalbandi

Jugalbandi is by no means a new word in the musical terminology. It simply means a duet, but a duet with a difference. Whereas in a duet there is a similarity in the combination, whether vocal or instrumental, it is just the contrary in a Jugalbandi. This dissimilarity may be of form or the instruments that are involved.

That is why its use by two major sponsors of Hindustani music in the City recently becomes debatable. In the first, a concert by the well-known Mishra Brothers, Rajan and Sajan, was listed as a Jugalbandi. It was plain and simple a duet. Another organisation went further to describe a tabla duet by Ustad Alla Rakha and his son Zakir Hussain a Jugalbandi. More intriguing was an experiment with a tabla (Zakir Hussain) accompanying a mandolin solo (U.Srinivas) should have been described as a Jugalbandi. Yet the usual other instruments billed for the concert like a violin (Delhi Sundarrajan) and a mridangam (veteran Vellore Ramabhadran) were categorised as accompanists. Obviously, the organisers might have thought that naming a prodigy like Zakir Hussain as a "mere accompanist" could be a denigration. If so, it is not being fair to the very art. Time we learnt to call a spade a spade!

The term Jugalbandi itself gained currency, perhaps when two giants of Hindustani music, Pandit Ravishankar (sitar) and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan (sarod) played together in a concert. Here the form was the same, but the instruments were different. That, verily was an ideal combination for a Jugalbandi. If both were singing the same style of music and playing the same kind of instrument, it would have been a duet and certainly not a Jugalbandi. The pattern is undoubtedly the same, but the connotation is not.

The idea has since caught up, involving all sorts of combinations. The most significant of them all is to juxtapose Hindustani and Carnatic styles of music on the same stage in a single concert. Despite the inevitable compromises that have to be made due to certain peculiarities in either, the experiment is becoming quite popular. Why, instances are not wanting where some twosomes have become regular teams: But from the aesthetic point of view, their impact is ephemeral. But one welcome feature of such experiments is the noteworthy sign of some diehard elements in either style slowly eschewing a persisting apathy to the other. That is reflected in an increasing number of music festivals where artistes representing the other invariably find a place in the bill of fare.

But if the concept has to become really purposeful, the performers should try for greater integration, interweaving their imagination and skill to portray one composite musical picture, instead of the routine airing of one 'avartan' after another alternately. A spirit of competition is desirable so as to arouse excitement. It must also facilitate the appreciation of the subtleties of each style as much by the artistes themselves as by the listeners at large. Then the concept will have achieved some thing concrete:

S.N.Chandrasekhar

Dancers as Political Rivals

Manu Vijay

IN LIGHTER VEIN

With the general elecirons round the corner, what greets one with his morning Cuppa is a story of political intrigue, plot and counter plot, accusations and explanations. These stories often leave me with a feeling of *dejavu*.

I've heard this one before, I say to myself and sit down to ruminate. And soon, it becomes bewilderingly clear: Our dancers, gurus and dance administrators in their eternal struggle for one-upmanship have become such masters in the art of political intrigue that one shudders to think of the consequence, lest they be let loose in the centre.

We have our own party system. The predominant schools of dance, forever asserting their supremacy. And while one shines at a particular period; the others sit in opposition. We have our defectors, but alas ! No Anti-Defection Bill!

Corruption is our middle name. Often has the grape vine delivered instances of bribery in the hallowed portals of, yes, the Doordarshan Kendra. While a traditional Mysore crepe saree ensures a 'special' programme, a routine printed silk will probably get you a 20 minute slot in the near (!?) future. Does that remind you of Indira Gandhi's wooing of Chickmaglur's women voters for her famous political come back ?

Claims and counter claims of authenticity and purity of style are made, much as various factions fight over party symbols. Journalists and scribes are favoured and rejected, pampered and prodded in keeping with the best examples of governmental politics. Of course, we have our PMO where it indeed pays to be seen every once in awhile.

Every dancer worth her name must be seen walking briskly out of the dusty offices of the Department of Kannada and Culture, for that indicates that she has divine grace (Oh! That Navaratri Programme!) Our bureaucracy indeed stands between the unreachable powers that be, those committees that select dancers for festivals; and us, poor mortals, while we wait, scorched in the sun, like expectant MP's waiting for party ticket.

Lobbying, of course, is a must, for without itwhere would we be?And of course we have our corporate backing, our Godfathers, our patrons and our own ministers! Just as quotas and seats are reserved for women and minorities in the various schemes dished out by the Government, we have boys and men searching for their place in the sun in a female dominated profession. While far away in Delhi a few people fight the battle of Hindutva, we in cozy Bangalore fight for local recognitions.

We have our T.N. Seshans, the watch dogs with the whiplash tongue, our Lakshmi Parvathis who shine in reflected glory; our militant Bal Thackerays, our Jayalalithas who imagine that they are above the law of the land; our charismatic Scindhia's,. our Manmohan Singhs who actually make a difference, our Chandrashekhar's who can't make up their minds, and our own Ramakrishna Hegdes who are in and out all the time.

I do indeed believe that we could teach our respected political representatives a thing or two about schemes and plots. In the long run, dancers, I think would make deadly political rivals for, while PVN's charms are questionable, who would not succumb to the flash of a mascarraed eye, or the flick of a long perfumed braid or that famous red lipped smile !?

31st Anniversary of K.C.P

A ten-day music festival under the aegis of the Karnataka College of Percussion, to celebrate its 31st anniversary of the college was inaugurated by Sri Vidyashankara Bharati of Sri Avani Shankar Mutt at the Adarsha Bhavan, Bangalore.

A book "Sogasuga Mridanga Taalamu Vol III", authored by T.A.S. Mani, principal of the college, and a cassette, 'Naada Vilasini' by R.A. Ramamani were released by A.H. Rama Rao.

Later violin maestros Lalgudi Jayaraman, Lalgudi G.J.R. Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi gave a befitting concert. T.A.S. Mani on mridangam and R.A. Rajagopla on ghatam gave good percussion support.

R.Vishweshwaran of Mysore rendered a neat veena recital accompanied by Umayalapuram Sivaraman on mridangam.

M. Surya Prasad

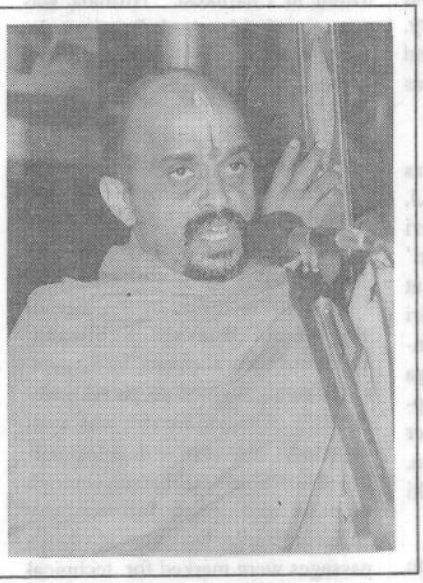
In the Footsteps of Haridasa

As the Sri Ramanavami is fast approaching, there is music in the air. In the weeks ahead, avid listeners can choose from more than a dozen locales spread over almost all the extensions in the City to muse over their favourite melodies.

Names big and small will fill the agenda, besides a few nondescript elements creeping in to satiate personal fancies. But the one name that is sure to find a place in the bill of fare of all these locales is Swami Vidyabhushana Teertha, Pontiff of the Sri Samputa Narasimhaswamy Subramanya Mutt, Kukke. Less than 10 years ago, he was a nonentity in the world of music. Today, he is the one vocalist no music organisation worth the name can ignore!

He is a minstrel who attracts the learned and laity alike. Whether in a remote place like Srirangam in Tamilnadu where he sang last year in connection with the Festival of Music of Karnataka under the auspices of the Trichy Rasika Ranjani Sabha, or nearer home the 26th Musicians conference of the Karnataka Ganakala Parishat at which he not only gave away awards to the President and other dignitaries, but also figured in the valedictory concert, rasikas could be seen thronging to his mellifluous singing sessions.

The Swami's minstrelsy indeed is verily an emotional outburst, the articulated enunciation of familiar Kannada devotionals especially making an indelible impact. If the discerning mull over his chaste intonation of the classical aria, the multitude would patiently wait for the later half to devour a veritable treat of choice "Dasara padas". In either case, there is a sense of fulfillment for the organisers.



With all this, it was not a cakewalk for the 42-year old Swamiji to fulfil his ambition of becoming a musician. Though music was in his vein, his father Govindacharya himself having been an accomplished songster, he was inveigled into the monastic order early in his boyhood. As it happens, there is little conviction in such an induction and the Swamiji himself was no exception. He has since not only resented it, but has also given vent to his view against the practice most vehemently. However, he has seemingly compromised, as his responsibilities as a mutt head have not come in the way, or perhaps he has not allowed them to come in the way, of his emerging as a vocalist!

This dual role is not without its challenges. While as a Pontiff of an important religious order he has to attend to the upkeep of a hallowed tradition, the increasing demand for his concerts constantly keeps him on the move. That he has succeeded in striking a balance between the two avocations speaks for his ambidextrous disposition.

Music, though his first love, has also given rise to considerable problems. In the beginning, his honorarium through concerts was not much. It was just enough to improve the community needs of the hamlet. As gradually the receipts started increasing, it was embarrassing as material possession was against the tenets of monkhood. It is then that the Swamiji decided to build an auditorium, "Govinda Ganasabha" named after his father. The auditorium built to modern specifications not only arranges for the impart of lessons in music to local school children, but organises annual music festivals on a grand scale. The festival this year (in the middle of January) featured such well-known artistes like Balamurali Krishna, T.V. Gopalakrishnan, M. Rajagopala Charya and others. The six-day festival also felicitated some artistes of eminence.

Despite his success as a musician, Sri Vidyabhushana is not the one to rest his oars. His father, his first guru, had no doubt laid a firm foundation in the art. But to hone his style, he approached well-known musicians like R.K. Srikantan and T.V. Gopalakrishnan to enrich his reptoire. But the mainstay of his concerts are the Kannada devotionals, many of them treated on the same level as a kriti with all the attributes of an alapana, nirval and swaraprasthara.

These ditties have become so popular that the sale of the cassettes comprising them has created a record of being the highest. So much so, the Swamiji has fondly come to be referred to as "Cassette Swamiji", a reputation which should remain unchallenged in the near future!

S.N. Chandrasekhar

Remembering Veena Seshanna

A Veena Seshanna Memorial Veena-Sitar festival, organised by Sri Lalitha Kala Academy Trust, Mysore, under the sponsorship of the Department of Kannada and Culture, on February, 8,9, and 10 featured two veena and two sitar recitals. The venue was Veena Seshanna Bhavana.

The inaugural veena concert was by M.K. Saraswathi, disciple of M.J. Sreenivasa Iyengar and Gowri Kuppuswamy. The alapana for 'Sri' was soothing, swara passages at 'Bhavana Bheda Chature' in Sri Varalakshmi was attractive. Hindustani Kapi with its bhashanga element was depicted with all its appealing charm. Meevalla proved her ability to bring out the Sahitya Bhava. She has indeed mastered the gayaki style.

Kamboji was the main raga of the evening. Starting from thara sthayi, Saraswathi elaborated the raga in the middle octave. The Thana in middle and fast tempo was neat. Pallavi in three kaalas was precise. The swara phrases, the ragamalika covering Athana, Bahudari, Kaanada, and Saraswathi featured, were crisp. The Sawal-Jawab session with the percussionists was engrossing.

Thani awarthana by H.L. Sivasankar and P.S. Sridhar on mridangam and ghatam was marked for finesse in laya and shruti.

The second day's programme started with a sitar recital by Nirmala Sankar Kurtukoti. She started with the evening raga Puriyakalyan, the Karnataka counterpart being 'Gamana- shrama'. A detailed alaap enriched by Jod and Jhala and followed by a gat in two speeds of theen taal was imaginative. Her next piece in Shivaranjani was equally attractive. She concluded her recital with a Dhun in Charukesi. Nirmala was accompanied by Asok Pattar on the tabla whose playing sometimes seemed to overpower the main artiste.

The second concert for the day was by R.K. Padmanabha of Bangalore, who played on his 200 year old 'Kanaka Rajatha Saraswathi Veena" gifted to his father, late R.S.Keshavamurthy, by the legendary Veena Bhakshi Subbanna. Padmanabha's alaapana in Sunadavinodini highlighted all its rakti elements. "Devadi Deva" was well depicted. He gave a detailed portrayal for Shankarabharana through alapana and thana followed by "Nagalingam" of Dikshitar. His swara passages were marked for technical skill, his ability to play off the frets, near the pegs proving his virtuosity.

His adherence to sruti and laya, impeccably is admirable. Use of harmonics, the daatu swaras were typical of the Mysore school of veena.

On the concluding day N.V. Gopinath of Bangalore, a disciple of the late Ustad Allaudin Khan of Maihar gave a sitar recital. He started with Suddha Kalyan, an evening raga, the Karnataka counterpart being Mohana Kalyani. The elaborate delineation of the raga was full of raga bhava. After jod and jhala, he started gat in vilambit and drut. Saranappa Guttargi on Tabla played interesting kayadas and complemented the main artiste.

Gopinath later played a dhun in Desh, and the Sringar in this raga was portrayed in all its hues followed by another dhun in Kapi. He ended the concert with alaap in Bhairavi, followed by a Dhun. His ability to produce five to six notes for a single meend was remarkable, showing dexterity even in the higher octove.

The three - day festival provided a feast of good sitar and veena recitals.

Neeraja Achuta Rao
Mysore

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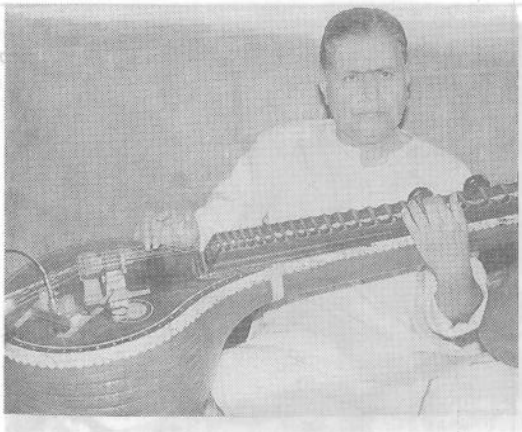


Chitti Babu

Akashavani's national programme of music (Feb ruary 17) when it thoughtfully cancelled its listed programme to play an old recording of Chitti Babu's veena recital is further proof of its commitment to music. While the media as also music sabhas in general had almost ignored the maestro's passing away on February 9, the AIR paid its homage by the best way open to it.

Actually, around that very date a couple of music festivals were on, including a major conference of musicians. But no reference was made to that child prodigy who had started giving full fledged concerts from the age of 12. He was one of the most popular instrumentalists of his generation.

There have been few vainikas whose creative ideas blazed so resplendently, though much to the chagrin of some purists. But he had made a mark, winning admirers all over. The tonality of the veena as he played revealed a potential to make the rendition as evocative as in a vocal, just as some unforgettable instrumentalists like T.R.Mahalingam (flute), Rajaratnam Pillai (nagaswaram), A.K.C. Natarajan (calrionet), to name only a few had done and N. Ravikiran (gotuvadyam), U. Srinivas (mandolin) and Kadri Gopalnath (saxophone) are doing.



R.K. Srinivasamurthy

Chitti Babu's technical improvisation synchronised so beautifully with his 'manodharma' that his notes easily appropriated with the words. Hence his concerts were aesthetic delights despite some idiosyncrasies that characterise geniuses. But they had not stopped him from winning all the coveted distinctions in the field of music. Besides the Sangeet-Natak Akademi award, he was the State artiste of Tamil Nadu (1981-87), Ashtnana Vidwan of both the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham and the Tirupati Devoswom. The Mylapore Fine Arts had conferred on him the title "Sangita Kala Nipuna". He had also made a name as a good 'guru', having attracted students from beyond the confines of his habitat.

The recital itself was sprightly, marked for Chitti Babu's controlled spontaneity and technical assurance. Whether it was the initial Enta Nerchina (Saveri) or Durmargachara (Ranjini), his wide-ranging interpretative power was unmistakable.

Charukeshi, the main raga in the concert, was accented and stylistically sensitive, the instrumental timbre light and weighty to suit the modal or lyrical demands. The delineation was seasoned with a rich variety of 'nirvals' and 'swara' passages. His artistic discernment was further embellished in the fringe melodies like Thillang, Sindhu-Bhairavi and Brindavani.

The recording deserves to be preserved in the national archives.

That was the only noteworthy feature for this column for the period as the World Cup Cricket series compounded the discomfi-

ture inflicted by the persisting load sheddings of the KEB. But the veena recital of R.K.Srinivasamurthy (March 3, 9:30 a.m.) was as refreshing as ever. His alap for Shanmukhapriya was noted for its verve, while the celebrated Dikshitar kriti Siddhivinayakam was moulded into an essay of aesthetic finesse.

Rukmini Pushpavanam's vocal next day (9:30 a.m) was as felicitous in the rendition of Ritigoula (Paripalaya) and Kambodi (Ratnakanchuka). It is by no means a very melodious voice, but Rukmini's modulation and the relish with which she intonates the numbers make for pleasant listening. It is here that Hema Ranganathan (March 5, 9:30 am) has a lesson. Her Athana (Sakalagraha) gave her a good start. But neither the alap nor the majestic kriti Ninnuvina (Purvikalyani) could sustain the same tempo. A little more attention to 'sruti' could be of help.

It is here that the recital of veteran R.K.Srikantan scored. His recent set back in health does not seem to have had any dent on his vocal chords. The alap for Panthuvarali itself had an arresting quality, unhustled grace and tempered modulation enriching the delineation. Senapate, a composition of Swati Tirunal is not generally heard in concerts, and its rendition revealed its lyrical grandeur. His ease in the bass came to the fore in Hrikathashravana (Ritigoula).

Hamsini Nagendra has a honed voice that aligns well with sruti, as evidenced in Kambodi (same day at 9:30 a.m). Her feel for the line in Sri Raghukula added lilt to her singing. The devaranama in Dwijawanti was equally touching.

What a cultured concert the one by Rudrapatnam Brothers R.N. Thyagarajan and



Hamsini Nagendra

R.N. Taranathan turned out to be (Jan 10, 9:30 p.m). Their chiselled style surfaced in the very first number Nenarunchi in Simhavahini, the rare Tyagaiah kriti Sri Manini in Purnashadja that followed redolent with lyrical charm. The studied way Kalyani was exfoliated was inspiring, as evidenced in the evocation of M. Nagaraj's violin turns. The celebrated kriti Etavunara was rendered with as much relish, accounting for wholesomeness.

As absorbing was the Charukeshi number (Hindustani sitar) of Shubendra Rao (Jan.11, 8:30 am). His deft fingering revealed sustained



Rajalakshmi Tirunarayan

'sadhana', some attractive phraseology in the different stages vouching for depth and fertile imagination. A re recording a little later (9:30 a.m) the same day of the same raga in a Lalgudi Jayaraman violin solo (Adamodigalade) was an interesting study in contrast. The tonal flourishes in his playing were effulgent, the lilting endearments familiarised through his fascinating Pada Varnam "Innum enmanam" lending a nostalgic aura to the majestic melody.

G.Rajnarayan's flute recital next morning was memorable for more than one reason. His Dhenuka (Teliyaleru) found as effulgent a response in Seshagiri Rao's violin turns. Begade (Shankari Shankuru) was as profound in its structural quality. An impactful concert. The successful run was maintained in tact by M.K. Jayashree Prasad (Veena) the next morning. Her airing of Mayamalavagoula (Deva Deva) revealed a refined style, a combination of melodic sensitivity and technical virtuosity, almost taking one back to the days when she dueted with her sister M.K. Saraswathi, consistently resulting in a rhapsody.

The major slot at 10:10 a.m. on the following Sunday failed to stir emotions; It was below par to say the least. Usha Ramamurthy's selections like Chakravaka and Bilahari were reassuring. But their rendition was pedestrian, the main raga Simhendra-madhyama (Rama Rama) straying in sruti once too often. It is that fidelity in sruti that raised the concert of R.N. Srilata (Jan 19, 8:30 a.m) to classic heights. The alap for Ritigoula itself was redolent with sprightly gamakas, the lyrical grandeur of the kriti Bale Balendu heightening the sensitive overtones of the melody.

Rajalakshmi Tirunara-

yanan is a veena artiste known for consistency which often makes one wonder why she has not received due recognition. Though confined only to the radio, her music is deep and sincere, raga elaborations unmistakably supporting the compositions that follow. Her Athana (Anupama-gunam), and Vachaspathi (Kantachudu) were cases in point. It was soulful music, sustaining a lingering impact.



Shanti Rao

G.Usha's vocal (23 Jan, 8:30 a.m) could not rise above the pales of mediocrity. Her brief also for Abhogi was on a low key, though the popular kriti Sabhapatiki was pleasurable. But M.K. Pranesh in his flute recital (Jan 24, 8:30 a.m) showed promise. His Malayamaruta number was not only tuneful, but defined the contours with conviction. Kalyani for which he intonated a 'devaranama' was equally within the bounds of resonance.

Usha Kesari has a honed voice, but her music can hardly vouch for hard work. Neither her Hamsanada piece nor the alap for Ritigoula (Jan 24, 9:30 a.m) could do justice to her form, though the kriti Nannuvidachi was no short of 'bhava', the only redeeming factor in the rendition. D.N. Gurudatt's vocal (Jan.24, 9:30 p.m) was not better, a shaky sruti coming in the way of such select pieces like Brocheva (Sriranjini) and Gnanamosagarada (Purvikalyani) blossoming. But the Hindustani vocal by K.V. Nanadakumar (Jan.25, 8:30 a.m) was better served in this aspect. Hence his Bilaskhani Thodi revealed striving for instant likeability, creating a variety of musical structures. It was a good effort by one who is evolving as a good vocalist.

The veena recital by Shanti Rao (Jan 25, 9:30 a.m) had an unmistakable verve and tempo. If her Nannubrova (Abhogi) was sombre with sonorous 'sangatis', she fused Begade (Shankari Neeve) with an array of familiar phrasings to enrich its melodic tapestry. Her playing was steady, without being exciting. But Ranganayaki Rajan's vocal (Jan 27, 9:30 a.m) fell short in expectation, obviously out of touch. The alap for Kalyani was no doubt on familiar ground, but the stately kriti Biranavara strayed away from 'swarasthana' once too often to be ignored. The line at "Neepadamu" especially had disastrous effects due to frequent slips.

B.S. Vijayaraghavan's recital (Jan.29, 8:30a.m) offered surges of optimism. The alap for Bilahari (Ekadantam) was arresting for its tonality and helped the ambience for an evocative Suruti (Angarakamashrayami). The variations in the 'sangatis' within the text and the enunciation itself made for pleasant listening. As engrossing was V.K.Raman's flute recital (Jan.31, 8:30 a.m). Whether it was a sensitive kriti like Terateeyaga Raada (Goulipantu) or the alap for Bushavali, the musical flow was graceful, helping the identification of more than one aspect of instrumental music. There was something at once primal and cerebral in Raman's artistry.

The start for February was, alas, not as auspicious Though B.R. Vijayalakshmi's choice of Vasantha (Maamava) was ideal, to be followed by Keeravani (Varamula), her 'sruti' remained faulty right through to render all her efforts futile. It was unevocative, to say the least. It is that fidelity in Sruti that stood in good stead of Suma Sudheendra's veena recital (Feb. 3, 8:30 a.m). Her enunciation of both Shanmukhapriya and Hindola was felicitous, her aesthetic impulses finding lucid expression through glowing phrases.

But a kind of rude authority in style virtually reduced M.T. Selvanarayana's essay for the National Programme (Feb 3) to anought. It was a handsome opportunity frittered away entirely due to negligence. Shelva no doubt, is endowed with a musical voice and his mentors are all veterans. He lives in an ideal ambience - staff artiste with the AIR for over two decades. But he has not put that background to good use. Instead it has made him complascent and his singing on that fateful day betrayed him to the hilt.

It was an excellent selection and anyone in the right frame of mind could make a meat of it. The familiar Sharanu Siddivinayaka (Sourashtra) itself found Shelva nervous. But it was not out of tune. Thereafter, it was a wash out, alaps and kritis straying away from the track right through. As in Devibrova (Chintamani) and the alap for Mohana (Pahimam Parameshari) there was form and the 'Pathanthara' was unmistakable. But the rendition itself could hardly vouch for any serious application. Kharaharapriya (Smanamevaru) was better honed, but certainly not free from slips, slips that could not be forgiven even in a fledgling.

ESSENCE

Shivayogi's Services to Music Recalled



At the inauguration of the 26th Music Conference. (LtoR) M.V. Subramanya, Chidananda Murthy, Nijaguna Shivayogi, N. Chokkamma, Y.K. Muddu Krishna, V. Doreswamy Iyengar and A. Veerabhadriah.

The 26th Music Conference of Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat and the Bicenterary of Sri Sarpabhushana Shivayogi was inaugurated by Nijaguna Shivayogi on February 14, 96 at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja.

In his inaugural address, Nijaguna Shivayogi recalled the services of Sarpabhushana Shivayogi and his contributions to music.

Veteran music, dance and art critic, B.V.K. Sastry, who traced the steps trodded by the Parishat for the past 25 years, also spoke on the important points to be discussed during the academic sessions.

Y. K. Muddukrishna, Director, Department of Kannada and Culture, praised the work of the Parishat in the field of music and felt that the Government has done nothing more than its duty in supporting the event.

Earlier, the programme commenced with a nagaswaram recital by Ramadasappa, accompanied by Venkatesh, R. Rajakumar and Mani (Tavil). The invocation was sung by P. Rama.

A. Veerabhadriah, President of the Parishat, welcomed the gathering and dignitaries followed by a report on the Parishat by its secretary, Mysore V Subramanya.

Proclamation of the conference president was made by B.V.K. Sastry which was duly seconded by Bangalore K Venkatram.

Veena maestro, V. Doreswamy Iyengar, chairperson of the experts' council, emphasised the importance of academic sessions.

Academic Sessions

B.C. Veerappa, a lecturer in Kannada spoke on the life and compositions of Sarpabhushana Shivayogi. B.S. Vijayaraghavan of Mysore sang some compositions by Shivayogi supported by S.V. Anant (violin) and Narasimha Swamy (mridanga).

T.S. Sathyavathy, in her demonstration on ragamalika compositions, explained its peculiarities, illustrating with a composition of Muthuswamy Dikshitar. She also spoke on Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer's 72 mela ragamalika and made important reference to the ragamalika composition of Ramaswamy Dikshitar.

Sarvamangala Shankar, in her lecdem said that the swaravachanas could be seen in the three Kaivalya works. She sang swaravachanas of Nijaguna Shivayogi supported by Basavanagudi Nataraj (violin) and R. Sathyakumar (mridanga).

K. Sadgurucharan of Vijayawada demonstrated the complex Panchamukhi Pallavi and traced its origin.

V. Doreswamy Iyengar highlighted the characteristics of Arabhi and Devagandhari. He illustrated the Significance of rishabha and dhaivata of Devagandhari.

In the symposium, "Women as Performers and their problems", Shakuntala Narasimhan and Neela Ramgopal participated.

M.S. Sheela spoke on the "Career Opportunities in Music" which was followed by a talk on "Woman and Music", by R.R. Keshavamurthy, M.A. Seetha, N.S. Krishnamurthy and Vimala Rangachar. L.G. Sumitra was the chairperson and B.V.K. Sastry delivered the keynote address.

Concerts

Concerts in the evenings commenced with the president of the conference, veteran veena player, N. Chokkama of Mysore giving a veena recital supported by M.S. Subramanyam (violin) M. S. Ramiah (mridanga) and K.N. Krishna Murthy (ghata).

Vocalist, Panthalu Rama was supported by H.K. Narasimhamurthy

(violin), P.G. Lakshminarayan (mridanga) and B.S. Purushottam (kanjara). Her panchanadai pallavi set to Shankarabharana was elaborate.

Nagavalli Nagaraj's concert was pleasing and she was supported by Lalgudi Rajalakshmi (violin), Anoor Dattathraya Sharma (mridanga) and T.N. Ramesh (ghata). Her pallavi in dual raga Nalinakanti and Hemavathi was scholarly.

A raga, tana and pallavi in Roopaka tala was the major item in R.K. Suryanarayana's veena concert. He was ably supported by B.K. Chandramouli (mridanga) and Sukanya Ramagopal (ghata).

It was a welcome change to have a sugama sangeetha recital in this conference. Noted singers who regaled the audience were Y.K. Muddukrishna, Ratnamala Prakash, Malathi Sharma, Raju Ananthaswamy and Anitha Ananthaswamy. They were supported by B.V. Srinivas (key board), N.S. Prasad (mandolin), N.S. Muralidhar (flute), S. Bali, Kashyap and Srinivasa Prasad (percussion and other effects).

The saxophone maestro, Kadri Gopalnath was supported by Kanya Kumari (violin), M.T. Rajakesari (mridanga), Sukanya Ramagopal (ghata) and B. Rajashekar (morsing).

Vocalist, R.S. Ramakanth was accompanied by K. Sadgurucharan (mridanga), and B.R. Ravikumar (ghata). N. Ravikiran played the Chitra Veena pleasingly to the accompaniments of Nalina Mohan (violin), V.S. Rajagopal (mridanga) and Bangalore K Venkatram (ghata).

Hindusthani had its share in this conference too, with a vocal concert by Shakuntala Narasimhan. She was accompanied by Vyasamurthy Katti (harmonium) and H.S. Gopinath (tabla).

The curtains of the conference came down with a recital by Sri Vidyabhushana Teertha Swamiji supported by B.U. Ganesh Prasad (violin), M.R. Sainath (mridanga) and M.A. Krishnamurthy (ghata).



N. Chokkkamma with M.S. Subramanyam (violin), M.S. Ramiah (mridangam) and K.N. Krishna Murthy (ghatam).



Sugama Sangeetha Recital

In the Vidwat Sadas held on the morning of February 18, the title, "Gana Kala Bhushana" was conferred on N. Chokkamma by Sri Vidyabhushana Teertha Swamiji of Sri Subramanya Math, Kukke. A.R. Chandrahasa Gupta, Secretary, Department of Kannada and Culture presided. Om Prakash Chourasia of Madhya Pradesh delivered the valedictory address.

Later prominent artistes, T. Nagamma (vocal), Chintalapalli Krishnamurthy (vocal), B.D. Venugopal (jaltarang), Nagabhushanachar (mridanga), B.P. Rajamma (harikatha), and Vimala Rangachar (patron) were felicitated by A.R. Chandrahasa Gupta.

Mysore V. Subramanya, the secretary of Karnataka Gana Kala Parishath who conducted the programmes with clock work precision and with a professional touch spoke on the deliberation of the conference and proposed a vote of thanks.

N. Sundarraj

USA Tour

Noted vocalist of Bangalore, M.S. Sheela is proceeding to USA on invitation on a concert tour of 80 days. She is accompanied by Nalina Mohan (violin), Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma (mridangam) and Sukanya Ramgopal (ghatam).

The Little Nattuvanar



Lakshmi

Only a couple of years ago, she was a stripling as care free as any other girl in an elementary school. And that is precisely what little Lakshmi was in 1994. She had just celebrated her 10th birthday by then.

But being the daughter of Padmini Ravi, a distinguished dancer who is as popular a dance teacher in her Pradhan Dance Centre, Malleswaram, watching the proceedings in the daily classes was part of the daily routine for Lakshmi. Few who had seen her frisking around at the time would have imagined that the art would have meant anything serious.

However, experience had taught Padmini, as it should have done to many a compeer of hers that it is easier to wangle dancing opportunities than to find a Nattuvanar loyal to her. During the 15 years of the dance school she would have trained at least half that number of her students in Nattuvangam too. Much to her chagrin, most of them have carved a career for themselves, their own commitments allowing them little time to meet their guru's demands.

Naturally frustrated, Padmini perforce started looking for a solution. One immediate way out was to test the aptitude of Lakshmi. Lo! much to her surprise and relief, she discovered an uncanny sense of laya in her. Added to it was Lakshmi's familiarity with the diverse 'sholkattus'. Why, she could recite some of the 'jathis' at the mention of the first syllable. Lakshmi had arrived, all that needed was a little seriousness that could be ensured with some effort of both the taught and the teacher.

Soon it became a pleasant sight to see the little girl occupying the prominent position in the wings when her mother was dancing. It was incredible, but true. She was wielding the cymbals as though she had been doing it from her birth. And her utterance of the 'jathis' articulated the cymbal sound as unfalteringly. No complex 'korvai' seemed a challenge to her and as she sits through such recitals, she displays uncanny concentration. She has indeed become an asset to Padmini in her career as a dancer.

All that she has to be wary of is to see that she does not steal the limelight from her

S.N. Chandrasekhar

Devagiri Sangeetha Sabha

Sri Devagiri Sangeetha Sabha and Sri Devagiri Venkateshwara Temple celebrated Thyagaraja and Purandhara Dasa day on January 26, 96.

Veteran Vidwan, M.A. Narasimha char was felicitated by the temple authorities on the occasion.

Shruti Cultural Forum

Shruti Cultural Forum, Yelahanka, Bangalore North, celebrated its first anniversary on February 15 and 16, 96.

A.R. Chandrahasa Gupta, Secretary, Department of Kannada and Culture, Government of Karnataka, who was the chief guest, released the souvenir. D.P. Char, president of Shruti pleaded for encouragement from the Government.

In his inaugural address, Gupta lauded the efforts by Shruti in promoting the cultural heritage and bringing the music and dance to this extension. S.Nagaraj, secretary said that Shruti is conducting a programme every month.

This was followed by a vocal concert by M.S. Sheela, supported by M.S. Govindaswamy (violin), Arjun Kumar (mridangam) and M.A. Krishnamurthy (ghatam).

Next day saw T.V. Shankaranarayan (vocal), accompanied by Manjunath (violin) and Praveen (mridangam).

Shimoga Fetes Balamurali

A four-day music and dance festival was organised at Shimoga from January 18 to 21, uder the auspices of B. Doreswamy Iyengar Trust.

In the inaugural concert Rajkumar Bharati commenced with 'Sathatha Gananatha Siddhiyanova' in Mohana, followed by 'Endaro Mahanu bhavalu' in Shri and 'Varava Kodu Vagdevi', a Kanakadasa krithi in Ranjini.

'Paalinchu Kaamakshi', of Shama Sastri, in Madhyamavathi was appreciated. He concluded the concert with Purandara Dasa's 'Daasa Daasara Maneya'. He was ably supported by Mysore Dayakar on violin, B.R.Sridhar on mrudangam and Sivaramakrishnan on ghatam.

Next day saw a pleasing dance performance by A.R.Sridhar of Bangalore. He was joined by Soundarya adding a touch of glamour to the programme. His guru Narmada assisted him on Nattuvangam and Srivatsa gave vocal support.

Impressive items were 'Vakratundam Mahakaya' in Naata followed by 'Adagala Thaaramma' of Purandara Daasa in Yeman Kalyani. He concluded with "Gummana Karayadire".

On Saturday, Sudha Raghunathan gave a neat and impressive vocal recital assisted by Vittal Ramamurthy on violin and Neyveli Ramamurthy on mrudangam. She commenced with a Varna in Bhairavi followed by 'Maha Ganapathim bhaje' in Atana of Sri Jayachamaraya Wadiyar. Thyaga raja's 'Shobillu Saptha Swara' in Jaganmohini and "Saadinchare" in Aarabhi were a treat. "Anandamrutha Varshini", of Muthuswamy Dikshithar was elaborated. "Pogadirelo Ranga" in Shankarabharana, "Srivalli Devasenapathe" in Nata Bhairavi (Papanasam Sivan) and Jayadeva Asthapadi added spice to the programme.



(Lto R) Venkataramana Sastry, M. Balamurali Krishna and M. Bharadwaj

On the last day, renowned musician, M. Balamurali Krishna was felicitated. The felicitation programme commenced with a Bharatanatyam recital by Priya, daughter of Saraswathi Sundaresan of Vipanchi.

Invocation was rendered by Uma and Suma.

M. Bharadwaj, managing trustee of B.Doreswamy Iyengar Trust welcomed the invitees and dignitaries and gave a brief account of the activities of the trust.

In his felicitation address, B.V.K. Sastri, a noted music critic gave a background of Balamurali Krishna. Another music critic, C.P. Chikkanna gave an account of the work done by Balamurali Krishna, as the secretary of 'Thiruvayyar Aradhana Mahotsava'.

Finally, T.Venkataramana Sastri, chairman of the local Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, honoured Balamurali Krishna amidst Vedaghosha, Nagaswara Vaadana and flowers shovering on him. A Shawl, a garland, a sandal wood casket and a citation were present to him.

In his reply, Balamurali Krishna who thanked the organisers for honouring him, recollected his first concert in 1942 in Bangalore. He mentioned that he had given more than 20,000 concerts.

Y.K. Srikantiah, leading local music composer was honoured by Balamurali Krishna.

-M.Bharadwaj

Purandarotsava

M. Suryaprasad



Vibhudesha Theertha Swamiji inaugurating the Purandarotsava

'Purandarotsava and Prathama Sangeetha Sammelana', a three-day music conference, oraganised by the Govinda Gana Sabha, at Sri Kukke Subramanya was inaugurated by Sri Vibhushana Sripadaru of Sri Adamaru Math on January 20, 96. Sri Balagaru Swamiji released the souvenir brought out on the occasion and scholar, S.K. Ramachandra Rao rendered the key note address.

Venugopalacharya, who presided over the meet was conferred with the title, 'Sangeetha Saraswathi' by Sri Pejawar Swamiji and Keshavananda Bharathi Swamiji of Sri Edneer mutt felicitated eminent artistes, Thitte Krishna Iyengar, R.R. Keshavamurthy, B.V. Narayana Itala, Gopalakrishna Iyer, T.K. Venugopala Das and Babu Rai.

After the inauguration, M. Rajagopalacharya sang devaranamas of Purandaradasa, 'Aadidano Ranga' in Suruti. M. Venkatesh Kumar sang with vibrant taans and boltans ably accompanied by Mownesh Kumar and Shashikanth Kulkarni on Harmonium and tabla respectively.

Rudrapatnam brothers, R.N. Taranathan and R.N. Thyagarajan, ...d music with right notes evoking emotional response. They rendered Purandaradasa compositions and embellished them with Carnatic decorations. 'Satata Gananatha" (Mohana), 'Ninna nodi dhanyanadhe' (Kamavardhini), 'Neene Dayalu' (Anandabhairavi), 'Pogadiralo Ranga' (Shankarabharana) with alapana, niraval and swaras, 'Dangurava sarirayya' (Kamboji) and a ugabhoga in ragamalika were sung superbly. Kanchana Subbarathnam (violin), V. Praveen (mridangam) and A.S. Narasimhaswamy (kanjira) gave good support.

M.S. Sheela's vocal concert was delightful with 'Vandisuvu daadiyali (Nata), 'Tunge mangala tarange' (Abhogi), 'Kodu bega divyamathi' (Vachaspathi), 'Katha- shravana maado' (Reetigowla), 'Manava janma doddadu' (Poorvi kalyani) and 'Kallu sakkare kolliro' (Kalyani). Nalina Mohan on violin, A.V. Anand on mridangam and Sukanya Ramgopal on ghatam gave a dependable rhythmic anchor.

Anupama Bhat gave a good account of herself in the delineation of Kharaharapriya (Rama neesamanamevaru).

Vasudha of Mysore demonstrated her prowess in her alignment with shruti and rich manodharma. Her Nata, Shuddha Dhanyasi, Athana, 'Neene ballidano Hari' and Bhairavi were executed with intelligent attention to detail. Raghuram, T.N. Ramesh and K.S.N. Swamy on violin, mridangam and khanjira respectively gave lively support.

Bidaram Krishnappa Remembered

Revered musician of Mysore, Bidaram Krishnappa was remembered during the Purandara Sangeethothsava and First Music Conference held at the Kukke Subramanya Mutt.

Bidaram Krishnappa did pioneering work in the propagation of Carnatic music in Mysore. His prominent disciples, veteran vocalist Thitte Krishna Iyengar and noted violinist R.R. Keshava murthy spoke on the personality, life and contribution of Krishnappa. Bidaram Krishnappa Rama Mandira at Mysore built by him stands as a monumental testimony of his contribution.

Thitte Krishna Iyengar sang one of the Dashavathara krithis of Krishnappa set to Poorvi Kalyani. His rendition of 'Ee sadanam moksha' with chittai swaras was enthralling. The Rishabhapriya was captured in his untiring presentation for 'Vachchitira ninne kori Dasharathi'.

Keshavamurthy spoke of Krishnappa's methods of teaching and presented two krithis of Krishnappa in Dharmavathi (Amba brovave) and Gamenashrama (Parvateesha maam paahi), accompanied by his wife, Krishnaveni on second violin and Narasimhaswamy on mridangam.

This was followed by a concert of Hyderabad brothers, R. Seshachari and R. Raghavachari accompanied by Mysore M Manjunath on violin, T.A.S. Mani of mridangam and M.A. Krishnamurthy on ghata.



Music Academy secretary Parthasarathy giving away Natyanjali Trust's Title to Padmini Rao.

Another Distinction for PADMINI RAO

Despite all its intrigues, an honour for a Karnataka artiste in Tamilnadu (Madras to be more precise) or vice-versa has its own significance, if not prestige. It is like winning in an India-Pakistan cricket match !

For Padmini Rao, the foremost disciple of Tanjore Kittappa Pillai and founder-director of the Ponniah Lalitkala Academy, Bangalore, winning such an honour is nothing new. Not long ago, when her disciple Vani Krishnaswamy was adjudged the "Best Dancer of the Year" by the Music Academy there, Padmini automatically walked away with the "Best Guru" distinction. That was only the second combination from the State to have won such a recognition, the first being Lakshmi Gopalaswamy and Narmada, also a Kittappa student.

This time on (January 18, 1996) Padmini who in her time was a vivacious dancer and has since confined herself to the chores of a Guru, was conferred with the coveted title "Natya Kala Saraswati". The title is instituted by Natyanjali Trust of Jayalakshmi Satagopan and the related 'birudu patra' was given away to Padmini by T.S. Parthasarathy, a Fellow of the Central Sangeet-Natak Akademi. It was a simple, but impressive function attended by a number of parents of Padmini's students and a sizeable number of local dignitaries in the realm of fine arts.

Padmini's prestigious choreographic pieces "Ashtalakshmi" and Sharabhoji Maharaja's masterpiece "Sharabhendra Bhupala Kuravanji" presented by her students on the occasion, were well received by the fairly large audience, Parthasarathy himself describing them as "aesthetic delight".

S.N. Chandrasekhar

Memorable Jugalabandi

Tarangini, Bangalore, presented a jugalbandi recital featuring Suma Sudhindra on veena and Ustad Shahid Parvez on sitar. Structurally and tonally sitar has an edge over veena. The inbuilt qualities of sitar lends it for a vibrant exposition. Suma and Sahid played with perfect understanding. V.S. Rajagopal on mridangam lent a formidable rhythmic support and Ravindra Yavgal on tabla was equally good. Their tani avarthana was short and sweet.

Obituary

Chittibabu Passes Away

Eminent veena maestro C. Chittibabu died on February 10, due to heart attack at Madras. He was 59.

Born in Kakinada, Chittibabu learnt veena at the age of five and gave his first concert when was 12 and gained recognition as a child prodigy.

Chittibabu was the disciple of late Emani Shankara Sastry. Suma Sudhindra and Shanti Rao of Bangalore are some of his prominent disciples.

He leaves behind his wife and three sons and hordes of admirers to mourn his loss.

Phoenix conveys its condolences to the bereaved family members.

Impressive Start for "Sankranthi"

"Shankranti", the musical programme that launched the Vidwan R.K.Srikantan Musical Trust, could not have banked on a more impressive concert than the one provided by Thitte Krishna Iyengar of Mysore. The nonagenarian vocalist only recently in the academic sessions of the Music Academy in Madras had captivated the scholars by his masterly vocalisation of choice melodies. They couldn't believe that one in that advanced age could be so precise in the finer points of the art.

His inaugural concert for the newly-formed Trust at the Adarsha Bhavan was as reassuring and impactful. It left few in doubt about the veteran's fecundity.

Krishna Iyengar's alap for Kalyani itself was robust, meandering on the salient 'sancharas' with effortless ease. "Devi Meenakshamudam", an old-time favourite in Mysore was rendered with due emphasis on the lyrical aspect. The sleek 'niraval' at "Pavana Madhuranilaye", embellished with cascading 'swara' passages enriched the aesthetic overtones.

It was thoughtful on the part of the organisers of the two-day (January 15 and 16, 1996) festival, viz, R.S. Ramakanth, M.S. Sheela, Suma Sudheendra and T.S. Satyavati, all students of Srikantan, to honour some of his contemporaries like Thitte Krishna Iyengar, R.R. Keshavamurthy, T.S.Tatachar and M.S. Ramaiah. It was however, a pity that an indisposition should have denied the well- intentional Srikantan the privilege of himself honouring such a galaxy of artistes. In his absence, A.R. Chandrahas Gupta, Secretary of the Department of Kannada and Culture, discharged that pleasant responsibility as elegantly.

A scholarly treatise by Prof.S.K. Ramachandra Rao on "Sampradaya Sangeeta", delivered on the occasion formed part of the colourful function. The talk in book form was also released at the function, a practice which will be followed every year.

Promoting young talent being one of the objectives of the Trust, a concert each by T.R.Srinath of Mysore on flute and Neela Ramgopal (vocal) were featured in the concluding day's programme.

S.N.Chandrasekhar

V.Kalavathi

Venkatram Kalavathi of Bangalore hails from a family of musicians. Her father, Bangalore K Venkatram is a renowned ghatam artiste and mother, G.R. Jaya is an accomplished vocalist. Her brother, Krishna is a mridan-gam and kanjira player.

Kalavathi had basic tutelage from her mother and Ushachar. She had advance training from late Anoor S Ramakrishna under the Government of India scholarship. Kalavathi acquired excellent knowledge and technique in executing good musical package in her concerts from her father Bangalore K Venkatram. She has established as leading vocalist of her age group.

Kalavathi has performed at the Percussive Arts Centre, Sri Krishna Sangeetha Sabha, Vijaya College of Music and also in other prestigious cultural organisations of Bangalore and other cities in Karnataka. She has also performed at Krishna Gana Sabha, Madras in 1994 and won the Best Singer Award of the sabha. Her performance at Indian Fine Arts Society, Madras in 1994 was appreciated by the audience.



V.Kalavathi

She is the recipient of awards from Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer and Lalgudi Jayaraman.

Kalavathi completed MA (Music) in 1992 with a first rank. She is a B high grade artiste in classical and light classical music of AIR. She has lent her voice to film music directed by M. Balamuralikrishna produced by G.V. Iyer. She has recorded two audio cassettes, Prathibha and Vasudeva Keerthana Manjari.

Besides music, her involvement in the Youth Forum of the Percussive Arts Centre is very deep. She teaches vocal music in the Ayyanar College of Music in Bangalore.

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